



**GRADUATE STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION
GRADUATE REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL MEETING
Tuesday, October 25, 2022, 5:30 PM**

Attendees:

Saaka Sulemana Saaka, President
James Steele, VP Academic
Cameron Armstrong, VP Finance and Services
A.C. Cameron, VP External
Masume Akbarki, VP Student Life
Keira Gunn, Labour Relations Committee
BrettC Nelson, Speaker
Quinn Goddard, Clerk
GRC Reps from the following DGAs:
Biochemistry and Molecular Biology
Biological Sciences Graduate Students' Association
Biomedical Engineering GSA
Biomedical Technology GSA
Chemistry Graduate Student Association
Civil Engineering Graduate Society
Classics and Religion DGA
Community Health Sciences Student Executive
Computational Media Design
Computer Science Graduate Society
Doctoral Association for Students of Haskayne
Economics Graduate Association
Electrical and Computer Engineering GSA
English Department Graduate Association
Gastrointestinal Graduate Students Association
Geomatics Graduate Group
Graduate Anthropology and Archaeology Student Association
Graduate Association of Geology and Geophysics Students
Graduate Programs in Education Students Association
Graduate University of Calgary Mathematics Society
History Graduate Students Union
Hotchkiss Brain Institute Trainee Organization
Immunology Graduate Association
Kinesiology Graduate Students Association
Linguistics Graduate Students' Association
Masters of Pathologists' Assistant GSA
Mechanical Engineering Graduate Students' Association
Medical Science Graduate Student Association
Microbiology & Infectious Diseases GSA
Nursing Graduate Students' Association
Philosophy Graduate Students' Association
Physics & Astronomy Dep Grad Association
Political Science Graduate Student Association

Psychology Graduate Students Association
School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape
Sociology Graduate Students' Caucus
Veterinary Medicine Grad Students Association
Vox Condiscipulum

Meeting Began 5:30 pm

Online Registration 5:30 pm

Territorial Acknowledgement (A.C. Cameron) 5:38 pm

Approval of the Agenda 5:40 pm

Motioned/seconded

Discussion: N/A

Opposed: 0

Abstained: 0

CARRIED

Approval of the May 2022 GRC Minutes 5:41 pm

Motioned/seconded

Discussion: N/A

Opposed: 0

Abstained: 0

CARRIED

CASA (Canadian Alliance of Student Associations) Intro (Christian Fotang, Kairvee Bhatt) 5:42 pm

- <https://www.casa-acae.com>
- Mission: Advocate for students with policy development and research
- Membership-driven: Bring issues experienced by graduate students to federal level
- Membership through cost per full-time equivalent student
- Non-profit status (held accountable to Non-Profit Corporations Act)
- Publish policy and research papers (regarding e.g. picture of student mental health across the country)
- Meet with Members of Parliament, Senators, Ministers, etc. to influence policy related to post-secondary education
- Partnership with UEQ (Union Etudiante de Quebec)
- Priorities for the year:
 - Student financial aid
 - Student mental health
 - Sustainability & housing
 - Decolonization
- What does this mean for UCalgary graduate students?
 - Representation at national level

- Professional development opportunities
- Can attend CASA conferences
- Participate in CASA committees and working groups
- *Question:* Any plans to support advocacy at the provincial level?
 - (Christian Fotang) Different provincial advocacy bodies already in place, so CASA tries to stick to federal advocacy to keep roles separate
 - Provide platform to network and get support, but don't want to control municipal or provincial organizations
- *Question:* How is CASA ensuring they are representing more graduate students?
 - (Christian Fotang) Beef up own policies to show how organization will help, not just promise that it will help

Preamble comments to GRC 101 (Saaka Sulemana Saaka) 6:10 pm

- Over 55 DGAs, and a minimum of two representatives from each DGA
 - Disappointed with turnout: large number of representatives are not attending meetings

GRC 101 (Saaka Sulemana Saaka) 6:12 pm

- Group of Active Members who deliberate on issues affecting GSA
- Graduate Representative must:
 - Attend GRC meetings to represent interests of Active Members in their department
 - Disseminate information to Members in their department
- Departmental Graduate Association (DGA) Policy
- Event funding contingent on all representatives being in attendance at GRC meetings
 - GRC representatives can only miss one meeting per academic year (can send proxy)
- Want to improve engagement of GRC representatives
 - Encourage fellow graduate students to show up and get involved in conversations held during meeting
- <https://gsa.ucalgary.ca/about-the-gsa/grc/>

University of Calgary Strategic Planning Initiative (Penny Werthner, Corey Hogan) 6:21 pm

- Current *Eyes High* strategy ran over past 10-12 years
 - Sunsetting strategy end of 2022, launching new strategic planning initiative
- Encompasses Academic, Research, Community Engagement, and Operational Excellence Plans
- Principles:
 - Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Accessibility
 - Indigenous Engagement
 - Mental Health
 - Sustainability
 - Global Engagement
- Emphasis on trans-disciplinary research
- Want to ensure it is community-driven plan: should be rooted in university collective
 - Open, collaborative, entrepreneurial enterprise that engages diversity of people
- Prestigious universities differ wildly in the extent of their strategic plans
- Plan to review student satisfaction more regularly (e.g. annually)
- Marquee goal (previously aspired to be a top-5 research university in Canada)
 - Develop new marquee goal from community feedback, or is it even needed?
- Anticipated timeframe for plan: 2023-2030

- Align with term of current UCalgary president
- Opened floor to discussion 6:33 pm
 - *Question:* What about framework for growth?
 - Guideline through which other plans are filtered and processed
 - This plan supersedes framework for growth
 - Principles that resonate with community from framework could be integrated
 - *Question:* Don't understand how this is different for framework for growth, or why this additional strategy is needed.
 - Framework for Growth is strategy university is operating under
 - Only has components of Eyes High
 - *Question:* Eyes High embodies entrepreneurial university, but does not fit well with many departments
 - Today is not for discussing specific slogans, terminology
 - Instead, posing questions like: should we have a marquee goal? Do we need nothing more than a mission statement?
 - *Question:* How can students get in contact to provide feedback?
 - Can contact provost email, but will find better email to contact

Judicial Review Board nominations (BrettC Nelson) 6:43 pm

- Today will be electing 10 members (7 + 3 alternates)
- Judicial Board does not meet regularly, but meets when Speaker calls meeting to discuss a dispute
- 10 members nominated (Tamara Manolache, Georgina Freeman)
- Kirsten Nepriily, Zachary Bailey, Melissa Glass) 6:49 pm

FSC Chair Nominations, Statements, and Voting (Cameron Armstrong) 6:51 pm

- Looking for Finance Standing Committee – Chair
 - Schedule Finance Standing Committee (meets once a month)
 - Minimum of two reports to GRC every year
 - Financial literacy workshops coordinated with VP Finance
 - Eligible for \$900 honorarium per year
- Two students nominated themselves (Pavana Sindhu, Justin Shimizu)
 - 1-minute election speeches
- Voting period started 6:57 pm
 - Pavana Sindhu elected 7:01 pm

Vice President Finance and Services (Cameron Armstrong) 7:01 pm

- Health and Dental updates
 - Updated preferred providers – over 50 new practitioners
 - Amend Blackout Period to reduce wait time for all students

President Report (Saaka Sulemana Saaka) 7:03 pm

- Staffing changes in GSA office (large staff turnover due to pandemic)
- 2023-2026 Strategic Plan
 - Consultation process started earlier this year
 - FGS, President's Office, GRC, etc. consulted

- Plan now needs to be drafted
- Lack of engagement with students
 - Create more financial opportunities for graduate students to fund DGA events, etc.
- Terms of Reference of the Nominations Committee
 - Work with Chief Returning Officer to improve election engagement, organize information sessions
- Proposed fee increases for 2023/2024
- Push for consultation guidelines development to get underway

Vice President Academic Report (James Steele) 7:09 pm

- Academic Advocacy
 - Work with individual students regarding funding, courses, etc.
 - Working with FGS to get three weeks of Protected Vacation for graduate students
 - Overhaul Student-Supervisor Relationship Policy
- Workshops (Academic Integrity, MITACS, etc.)
 - Very well-attended so far
 - In process of planning more professional development workshops
- PEER Beyond Conference (February 11-12 2023)
 - Currently accepting submissions for poster presentations and creative performances
 - Contest to create graphic design and slogan for conference
- Awards
 - Extremely high numbers of students applying for GSA Emergency Bursary
 - Put pressure on university to provide more funding for bursary

Vice President Student Life Report (Masume Akbari) 7:13 pm

- Student Engagement and Events
 - Upcoming intersectionality conference at art gallery
- DGAs and GSGs
 - Increasing DGA Event Grant to \$1300 (pilot program)
 - Removing cap of \$150 on event grant requests
- Mentorship Program
 - Assist newcomers and international students with smoothly transitioning to life in Calgary

Vice President External Report (A.C. Cameron) 7:16 pm

- Brief stretching period
- Work with CASA, ab-GPAC
- Calgary Student Alliance for Transit
- Food Security working group
 - Implement UN SDG#2: Zero Hunger
- Advocacy Engagement Working Group
 - LOUD (Let's Organize University Departments)
 - Town Hall not well attended
 - Working Group shifting focus to DGA training sessions
- To increase transparency, created workplan for upcoming year
 - Food-housing security, empowering grassroots advocacy, research with partner groups (CASA, abGPAC, CSA)

DGA Consultation Period 7:22 pm

- (A.C. Cameron) TFCC (Tuition and Fees Consultation committee) receives proposals from different offices on campus for what university proposes to do for fees for upcoming year
 - Final decision made at board of governors level
 - Most graduate students will see baseline 2% tuition increase, but 5.5% (10% international) for course-based degrees and M. Eng
 - Increases retroactive to students who started May 2022 (or later)
 - Alberta government has plans to cut their grants if university doesn't increase tuition (and increase private sources (fees) in operating budget)
 - Move to privatize universities
 - Want to fight privatization at the provincial level
 - E.g. In 2017, tuition revenue was much smaller component of revenue
 - Hands are tied with how to still keep university operating without increasing fees
 - Rates come in at less than CPI (7%), can accept on following conditions:
 - Bursary pools increase at same pace (to keep pace with CPI)
 - Institutional strategy to address food insecurity
 - Improve consultation with students on new projects
 - No provincial legislation on international fee increases
- *Question:* Are these increases already reflected on student portals?
 - No, will update over the summer
- *Question:* Why are course-based fees going up more? Does the fee hike affect currently enrolled students?
 - If they pass, do not affect currently enrolled students.
 - GSA does not have access to determinants of course-based fee increase
 - Good question for Budget Town Hall (Nov 1)
- *Question:* How can we request service improvement from the university if the current university services aren't good right now?
 - Looking into avenues to increase funding, but has to come from somewhere
 - Provide feedback to different services
- *Question:* Tuition re-investment bursary?
 - Can apply until Nov 15

Question Period (BrettC Nelson) 7:51 pm

- Can't continue going over-time, so can stay late if have questions
- *Question:* Current GRC agenda does not allow for deliberation
 - (Saaka Sulemana Saaka) Something that has been emphasis in evaluating re-structuring of GRC meetings, will be taken into consideration for November GRC
- *Question:* Could there be a means of receiving asynchronous updates? Asynchronous participation for more participation? Why aren't more important topics discussed earlier in the meeting?
 - (A.C. Cameron) Asked what preferred medium for receiving updates
 - (Saaka Sulemana Saaka) suggested creating Teams to disseminate updates

LRC Vice Chair Positions (Keira Gunn) 7:57 pm

- Call for new members to grow and support academically employed graduate students, provide support to current chair
- Get descriptions at roles: <https://gsa.ucalgary.ca/resource-fo-tas-and-ras/getinvolved-lrc-2>

- Application deadline: November 7

DGA Updates 7:59 pm

- Representative from Anthropology and Archaeology: overhead research fee for external funding not getting communicated to students
 - Should be communicated to other DGAs

Meeting adjourned at 8:03 pm